



F-22 Newsletter



January 2001

The Initial F-22 Operational Wing Beddown Proposal

The U.S. Congress determined the need to provide the U.S. Air Force with a next-generation fighter to replace and supplement the aging F-15C fleet and to ensure air dominance well into the 21st Century.

- The proposed action is to establish (beddown) the first Operational Wing of F-22 fighter aircraft at Langley AFB in Virginia.
- There are currently four alternative locations for the Initial F-22 Operational Wing beddown:
 - Eglin AFB, Florida
 - Elmendorf AFB, Alaska
 - Mountain Home AFB, Idaho
 - Tyndall AFB, Florida
- The beddown would involve basing 72 primary F-22 aircraft.
- The beddown would require no changes to current military airspace boundaries.
- Facility construction or modifications, and changes in personnel and aircraft operations associated with the beddown vary from base to base.

What's Inside this Newsletter?

- The Contents and Layout of the Draft EIS
- A Summary of the Scoping Process and Public Input
- The EIS Timeline

Keeping You Informed and Involved

This newsletter has been prepared to keep you informed about the Initial F-22 Operational Wing Beddown Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS will provide the Air Force with an understanding of the potential environmental consequences associated with the proposal to beddown or locate the first Operational Wing of 72 F-22 fighter aircraft. This newsletter describes where we are in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. The Timeline on page 3 of this newsletter shows the primary activities in the F-22 NEPA process.

What the Draft EIS Will Contain

The Air Force is currently preparing the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or Draft EIS. The Draft EIS is designed to give you a reader-friendly document that describes the proposed F-22 beddown. Chapter 1 discusses the purpose and need for the Initial F-22 Operational Wing beddown and describes the features of the F-22 Raptor as a superior supplement and replacement for the F-15C Eagle. Chapter 1 also explains how the F-22 will be based and how aircrews will train. Chapter 2 presents a comprehensive description of the characteristics associated with the beddown and a comparison of environmental consequences.

Chapter 3 is divided into five base-specific sections that explain how the beddown would be implemented at each base. These five sections describe each base's affected or current environment and identifies the potential environmental consequences of the beddown. Each base section is divided into five resource groups identified by these icons:

Aircraft Operations



Natural Resources



Cultural and Traditional Resources



Human Resources

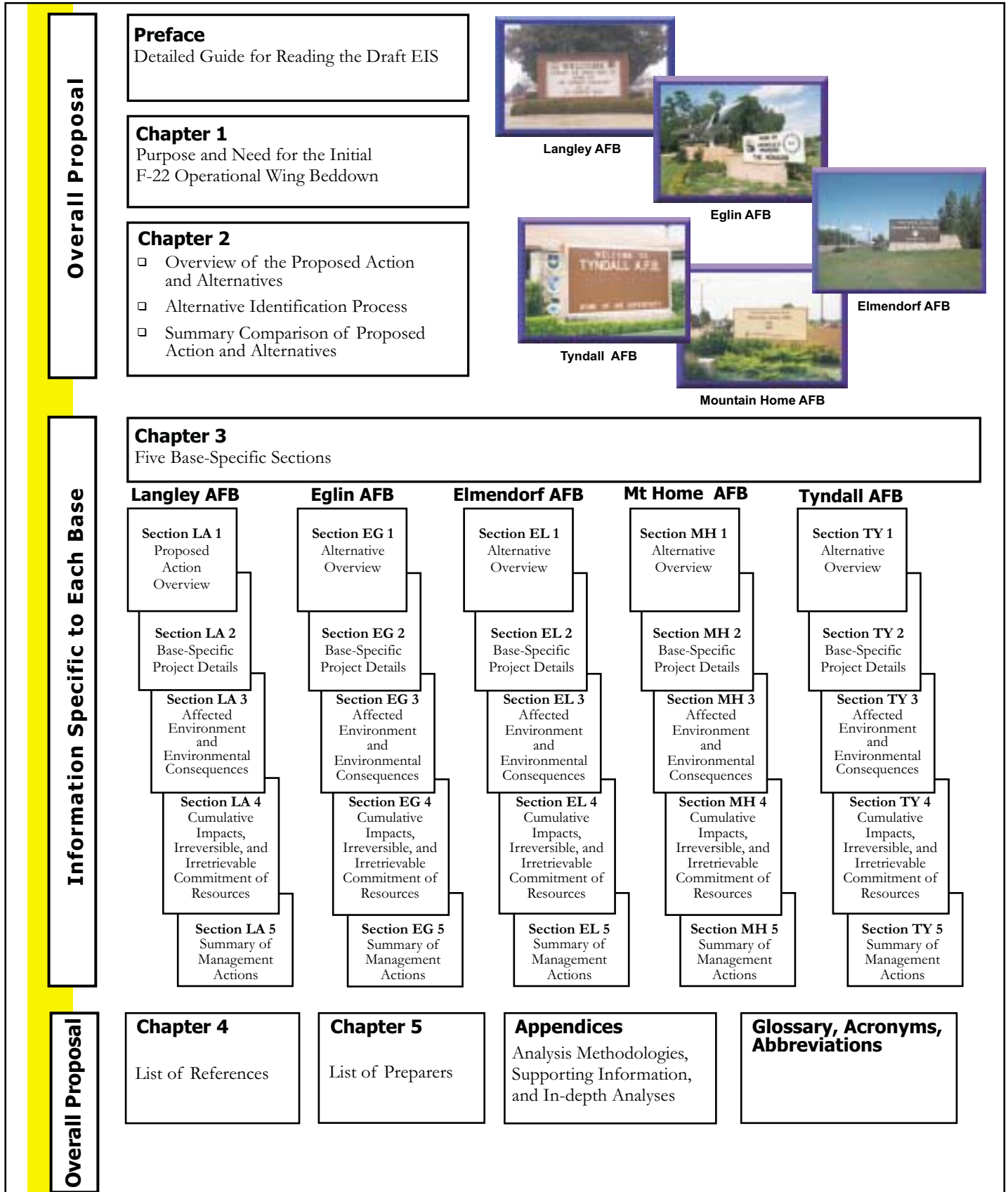


Community and Infrastructure



Each group is further divided into related topics: for example, the first group, *Aircraft Operations*, provides the analyses for Airspace Management and Use, Noise, Air Quality, and Safety.

Here Is How the Draft EIS Is Organized



The Importance of Public Involvement

Public involvement is an integral part of the environmental analysis process, and the first opportunity for involving the public is called scoping. If you attended one of the many scoping meetings or submitted a comment during scoping, you became part of the environmental analysis process and helped get the process off to a good start. In particular, the comments we received from you during scoping helped identify pertinent environmental issues that needed to be addressed in the Draft EIS.

The scoping process began when the Notice of Intent to prepare the Initial F-22 Operational Wing Beddown EIS was published in the *Federal Register* on March 3, 2000. The EIS process has undergone an extensive 8-month public scoping period, with 33 scoping meetings in five states. In order to ensure maximum opportunity for community dialogue, scoping was conducted in two distinct phases.

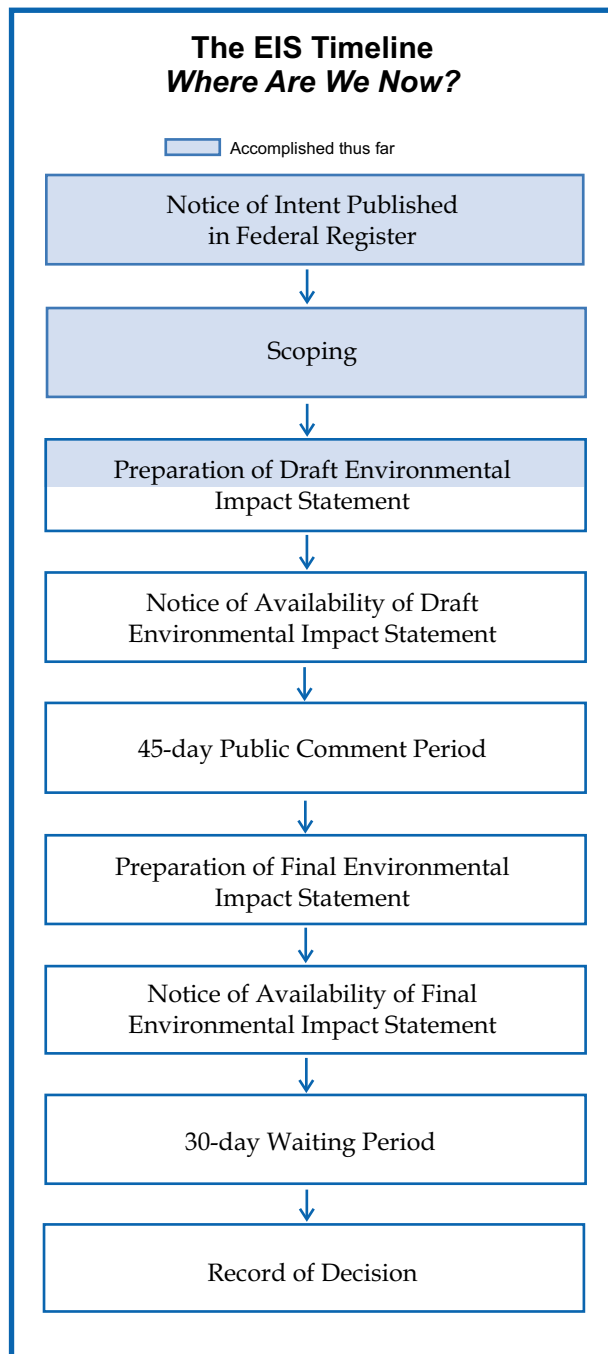
Phase-One of scoping was conducted in March/April 2000. One meeting was held at each of the five basing locations, primarily for the purpose of receiving public comment on the location and refining the alternatives. After completing Phase-One public scoping meetings, the Air Force considered operational requirements and environmental data, as well as public comments, for the purpose of narrowing down the candidate bases. After this initial review and based on the current information, the Air Force determined that all five candidate bases continue to be reasonable alternatives for the Initial F-22 Operational Wing beddown and should be analyzed in more detail in the Draft EIS.



Throughout the Draft EIS, we have summarized issues identified during scoping and highlighted them within the document. This attention to public comments is designed to help decision makers understand items of interest to the public and agencies.

The Air Force held 28 Phase-Two scoping meetings from July through November 2000. The purpose of these meetings was to gather community-specific information regarding the beddown at each location and in the vicinity of the associated training airspace. Because of your

involvement, we learned what issues are important in your community. The input we received throughout scoping is helping us prepare a focused, issue-driven Draft EIS.





What Did We Learn During Scoping?

During the scoping meetings, people and agencies asked questions and expressed thoughts and concerns regarding the F-22 beddown. People and agencies also gave input in the form of written comments.

We learned . . .

. . . that many people support the Air Force base in their area. Scoping participants asked questions and expressed their interest and concern about the potential for additional noise from the F-22 compared to the current F-15C. This was the most common issue voiced at scoping meetings. People wanted to know if noise will affect them, wildlife, marine mammals, subsistence activities, recreationists, and communities under or near the military training airspace. Residents also wanted to know if there would be an increase in the number or frequency of sonic booms from training activities.

We are responding . . .

. . . by providing detailed discussions in the Draft EIS about the projected noise differences between the F-22 and F15C and several other Air Force aircraft. Information on current and projected noise levels, aircraft operations, and sonic boom generation are discussed in Chapter 2 and also in Chapter 3 under *Aircraft Operations* for each base-specific section. Noise is also discussed under other resource groups such as *Natural Resources*, *Cultural and Traditional Resources*, and *Human Resources*.

We also learned . . .

. . . that people's concerns vary depending on where they live. As discussed above, noise questions were heard at all meeting locations. However, not all locations were concerned with the effects of the F-22 beddown on the local economy and community infrastructure. In varying degrees, people wanted to know how the beddown would impact federal or state sensitive wildlife species. People also asked questions about the potential for conflicts with civilian aircraft, air quality changes, and safety.

We are responding . . .

. . . by making sure the Draft EIS is a comprehensive and well-organized document that analyzes a broad range of environmental and human resources, because people's concerns can cross several resource areas. Each base-specific section in the Draft EIS presents the current conditions of all resources at each base, and the details of the analyses are shown under the *Environmental Consequences* sections. Chapter 2 contains a table called *Comparative Summary of Environmental Consequences* which compares the environmental consequences at each base. The comparative analysis is designed to assist the public and the decisionmaker in identification of differences among the basing alternatives.

The Draft EIS is scheduled to be produced and distributed in spring of 2001. The Draft EIS will be available on CD, in hard copy, and on the CEVP website (www.cevp.com). CEVP is Air Combat Command's environmental branch that provides environmental analysis support for the Air Force. This newsletter can also be found on the CEVP website, along with other information related to the Initial F-22 Operational Wing Beddown EIS and other Air Combat Command projects.

Who can you contact?

For general information or to request a CD or a hard copy of the Initial F-22 Operational Wing Beddown Draft EIS, please contact:

SMSgt Kevin Walston
HQ ACC/PA
(757) 764-5007

In the Next Issue

The next issue of the F-22 newsletter will be mailed in spring of 2001. The newsletter will talk about

- the Draft EIS mailing
- the public hearings on the Draft EIS
 - the purpose of the hearings
 - the schedule and location of hearings
- opportunities to comment on the Draft EIS and how to make your comments more effective